LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 94
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Trial and Death of Socrates

Edited, with an Introduction, by
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HALDEMAN-JULIUS COMPANY
GIRARD, KANSAS

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THE TRIAL AND DEATH OF SOCRATES

I. INTRODUCTION.

1. HISTORICAL SETTING.

Far back in the twilight-obscurity before the dawn of history (about fifteen centuries Before Christ), one of many Aryan-speaking tribes spread southward into the Balkan peninsula and usurped for their own the mountainous lands of the Ægean. These were the Greeks, divided into three main tribes or groups. They possessed scarcely no unity save that of spirit —they had their *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which, however, were not written down until the eighth century B. C.—until, gradually through the years, they came to acquire a religion, to build cities, and to widen their intellectual and physical horizon.

Mountains prevented the early Greek cities from uniting in a federation that level lands might have inspired. Not until invaded by the world-conquering Persians, and forced by the harsh lash of necessity, did they come to perceive the real advantages of union. But the dim wisps of darkness were blown from their minds—as early as the sixth century B. C. Greece was "awakening" as though to its ultimate destiny. Men were curious about their world: how came it into being, what existed before it, how far did it extend? About this time, too, Buddha was "teaching in India and Confucius and Lao Tse in China. From Athens to the Pacific the human mind was astir."

Came the advance of the power-hungry Darius, head of the far-flung Persian Empire, to be ignominiously defeated, in the memorable year of 490 B. C., on the field of Marathon at Athens. A runner was sent to Sparta (Athens' chief rival) for aid, and he made some one hundred miles in about forty-eight hours, and that over an uneven country! Sparta responded to the call, but the reinforcements arrived to find the field strewn with the remnants of the Persian army. (The origin of the present Marathon races is a commemoration of the run made by a messenger from the battlefield to Athens, announcing the Athenian victory; somewhat over twenty-six miles.)

A second Persian invasion, under Xerxes, forced the pass of Thermopylæ after a gallant resistance by its defenders and advanced to find Athens deserted. They reduced the city to ruins—but the Greek fleet rallied against the Persian ships and defeated them in the naval battle of Salamis. This marked the end of the Persian menace.

There followed the Age of Pericles (466-428 B. C.), during which the inspiration and dominance of Pericles' powerful personality made for the beautiful rebuilding of Athens. As a crown for the glory of this Golden Age, the Acropolis at Athens was made so marvelous a citadel of architectural and sculptural splendor that its very ruins stand high in the achievements of art! In the enlightened spirit of the times genius was loosed on all sides; men of ability were provided opportunities for their art, and many were attracted from other cities;

indeed, the mistress of Pericles was a woman from an adjoining city, whom he could not marry because of the law that made an Athenian choose his mate from among the native-born—by name, Aspasia, her education and intellectual powers enabled her to acquire the respect of the greatest men of the age.

But in considering the enlightenment of Athens, it is well to remember that, then as today, this enlightenment was restricted to a comparatively small group at the very upper end of the scale of society. The streets of Athens had their rabble, and pettiness, squalor, stupidity, hypocrisy, Philistinism—in short, all the evils of the "morons" against whom there is such violent agitation in the twentieth century A. D. had their place in the Athens of glorious Greece. This, not to detract from the really great and significant qualities of the age of Pericles, but to demonstrate the futility of that philosophy which seeks to restore the glory of Greece as the divine perfection of some vanished Utopia.

Indeed, the "common" men of Athens grew weary of Pericles. He was caricatured in comedies; rumors of the domestic iniquities of Aspasia were common property in the streets; Phidiás, the master sculptor, was imprisoned for putting the portrait of Pericles on the shield of Athena—he was charged with impiety. Pericles himself was thus not immune from the trials of all great men—"Fame blowing out from her golden trumpet a jubilant challenge to Time and to Fate; Slander, her shadow, sow-

ing the nettle on all the laurel'd graves of the Great;" (Tennyson).

Petty quarrels and "pigmy spites" culminated in the long and weary strugle of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B. C.), which was in reality the internal struggle of the Greeks toward political unity. First one city and then another triumphed—Athens, Thebes, Sparta. In 404 Athens was overcome by Sparta, and was subjected to rule of the Thirty Tyrants—soon to be overthrown by the democracy of Athens.

Such was the time of Socrates. Probably at the time of Pericles' decline and death this philosopher was a familiar figure on the streets of Athens.

2. SOURCES.

The Athenian State of those days had no single man at its head. Following the overthrow of the Thirty Tyrants, the city was ruled by an Assembly, made up of citizens. Slaves, freedmen, and aliens (anyone unable to prove Athenian descent on both sides, maternal and paternal) were barred from citizenship, and hence, from a part in the government. In time, there came to be groups, corresponding to committees, that took departments of government under their individual tutelage. These were generally selected, not by vote, but by lot. In complaints, or lawsuits, each citizen could indict any other, and each citizen must plead or defend his own case.

Thus there grew up a need for ability in argument. Juries of Athens numbered no paltry twelve men, carefully selected by the lawyers—the dicasts that tried cases sat in

assemblies numbering anywhere from 401 to 1001 (an odd number probably to prevent a tie vote). It became an advantage to know something of oratory, or clever verbal tricks, in short, of cross-examination. For this purpose, or partly because of this need, the Sophists came into prominence. They attacked, verbally, the established beliefs of the age, and taught young men in the art of debate, for pay. Their teachings were fallacious, and deliberately so. They utilized skill in argument, at the expense of accuracy and logic, to "put over" the opinions they desired.

Into this Athens walked Socrates (a native, born about 469 B. C.) to expose the bad arguments of the Sophists. Not particularly for that purpose, to be sure, but incidentally—for the province of Socrates was truth. Sublime disillusionment was his goal, and to that end he sacrificed all else—"a clumsy and slovenly figure, barefooted, gathering about him a band of admirers and disciples." By a method of cross-examination, or asking questions, Socrates exposed the wrong-thinking of the time, striving after accurate definitions of common terms, and seeking to benefit every man by demonstrating to him his utter ignorance. His method, entirely verbal, has been perpetuated by Plato in the immortal *Dialogues*.

But Socrates never wrote a word. All we know of him has come down to us in the writings of others, and that, almost exclusively, in the works of two men: Plato and Xenophon, one an idealistic philosopher, the other a practical, hard-headed soldier. And our knowledge

is, again almost exclusively, confined to the last years of his life. It is possible to assume that he was beginning to be prominent at the time of Pericles' death (428 B. C.), and five years later (423 B. C.) his prominence is confirmed by Aristophanes' caricature of him in a public comedy—for to burlesque a man is to recognize his prominence.

In utilizing the sources for knowledge of Socrates difficulties at once arise. Plato, his pupil, idealized the man and put into his mouth much of his, Plato's, philosophy. The *Apology*, for example, records the supposed words of Socrates at his trial—supposed, because, although Plato was present and heard the actual words, he took no notes and had no means of recording Socrates' speeches exactly. Furthermore, as Plato has transcribed them, the speeches show a preparation and knowledge of oratory that Socrates was very likely incapable of. But the fact nevertheless remains that the picture Plato has drawn of the man, as a portrait, is essentially accurate: the use of Socrates as a character in the *Dialogues* being analogous, in a large degree, to the use of historical figures in modern drama (John Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln* is a recent example).

On the other hand, Xenophon probably, with the contempt of the soldier for high flights of the imagination, obscured much of the real Socrates under his passion for recording only the essential facts, minus verbal adornment. So, somewhere between Plato and Xenophon the real Socrates is to be found—it is enough,

after all, to know the best of the man and be denied the rest.

The principal Platonic sources for the trial and death scenes of Socrates' life are the *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*. Xenophon, in his *Memorabilia*, records further information. He also wrote an *Apology*, or "Defense of Socrates," of which the authenticity is sometimes doubted.

3. THE MAN.

For a contemporary portrait of Socrates, it is possible to turn to the passage known as Alcibiades' Praise in the *Banquet* of Plato. In the words of Percy Bysshe Shelley's translation:

"I will begin the praise of Socrates by comparing him to a certain statue. Perhaps he will think that this statue is introduced for the sake of ridicule, but I assure you that it is necessary for the illustration of truth. I assert, then, that Socrates is exactly like those Silenuses that sit in the sculptor's shops, and which are carved holding flutes or pipes, but which, when divided in two, are found to contain the images of the gods. I assert that Socrates is like the satyr Marsyas. That your form and appearance are like these satyrs, I think that even you will not venture to deny; and how like you are to them in all other things, now hear. Are you not scornful and petulant? If you deny this, I will bring witnesses. Are you not a piper, and far more wonderful a one than he? For Marsyas, and whoever now pipes the music that he taught,

for that music which is of heaven, and described as being taught by Marsyas, inchants men through the power of the mouth. [F. J. Church corrects this meaningless sentence to read: For Marsyas, and whoever now pipes the music that he taught, (for it was Marsyas who taught Olympus his music), enchants men through the power of the mouth.] For if any musician, be he skilful or not, awakens this music, it alone enables him to retain the minds of men, and from the divinity of its nature makes evident those who are in want of the gods and initiation. You differ only from Marsyas in this circumstance, that you effect without instrument, by mere words, all that he can do. For when we hear Pericles, or any other accomplished orator, deliver a discourse, no one, as it were, cares anything about it. But when anyone hears you, or even your words related by another, though ever so rude and unskilful a speaker, be that person a woman, man, or child, we are struck and retained, as it were, by the discourse clinging to our mind.

"If I was not afraid that I am a great deal too drunk, I would confirm to you by an oath the strange effects which I assure you I have suffered from his words, and suffer still; for when I hear him speak, my heart leaps up far more than the hearts of those who celebrate the Corybantic mysteries; my tears are poured out as he talks, a thing I have seen happen to many others besides myself. I have heard Pericles and other excellent orators, and have been pleased with their discourses, but I suffered nothing of this kind; nor was my soul ever on

those occasions disturbed and filled with self-reproach, as if it were slavishly laid prostrate. But this Marsyas here has often affected me in the way I describe, until the life which I lead seemed hardly worth living. Do not deny it, Socrates, for I well know that if even now I chose to listen to you, I could not resist, but should again suffer the same effects. For, my friends, he forces me to confess that while I myself am still in want of many things, I neglect my own necessities, and attend to those of the Athenians. I stop my ears, therefore, as from the Sirens, and flee away as fast as possible, that I may not sit down beside him and grow old listening to his talk. For this man has reduced me to feel the sentiment of shame, which I imagine no one would readily believe was in me; he alone inspires me with remorse and awe. For I feel in his presence my incapacity of refusing to do that which he directs; but when I depart from him, the glory which the multitude confers overwhelms me. I escape, therefore, and hide myself from him, and when I see him I am overwhelmed with humiliation, because I have neglected to do what I have confessed to him ought to be done; and often and often have I wished that he were no longer to be seen among men. But if that were to happen, I well know that I should suffer far greater pain; so that where I can turn, or what I can do with this man, I know not. All this have I and many others suffered from the pipings of this satyr.

"And observe, how like he is to what I said, and what a wonderful power he possesses.

Know that there is not one of you who is aware of the real nature of Socrates; but since I have begun, I will make him plain to you. You observe how passionately Socrates affects the intimacy of those who are beautiful, and how ignorant he professes himself to be; appearances in themselves, excessively Silenic. This, my friends, is the external form with which, like one of the sculptured Sileni, he has clothed himself; for if you open him, you will find within admirable temperance and wisdom. For he cares not for mere beauty, but despises more than anyone can imagine all external possessions, whether it be beauty, or wealth, or glory, or any other thing for which the multitude felicitates the possessor. He esteems these things and us who honor them, as nothing, and lives among men, making all objects of their admiration the playthings of his irony. But I know not if any one of you have ever seen the divine images which are within, when he has been opened and is serious. I have seen them, and they are so supremely beautiful, so golden, so divine, and wonderful, that everything which Socrates commands surely ought to be obeyed, even like the voice of a god."

Alcibiades goes on to describe Socrates' hardihood as a soldier—like every good citizen, Socrates had served in the army, saving Alcibiades' life in an early battle. His endurance was phenomenal: he endured privations with a fortitude unequaled by any other man, and he never knew the meaning of fear. In appearance he was much as Alcibiades has pic-

tured him—"his flat nose, thick lips, and prominent eyes, like a satyr, or silenus." The satyrs and Sileni were woodland followers of the wine-god Bacchus, and had the almost gross characteristics of feature that made Socrates far from handsome to look upon. But the one or two images that remain of him show that in his homeliness he had more than a rugged dignity.

Socrates took to his heart the Greek doctrine, "Know thyself." He believed that to begin to have knowledge, a man must first realize his ignorance. Proceeding from this, he taught that "Virtue is knowledge" and "Vice is ignorance"—that is to say, if a man knows what is right, he will do right, and he cannot do right unless he knows. In this, Socrates was, as we know, but half possessed of the truth: his philosophy failed to take into account the natural, spontaneous right-doing that comes from conscience, or, if you will, innate goodness.

Socrates was born, as near as can be estimated, about 468 B. C. His father was a sculptor, and his mother a midwife. Socrates served in the profession of his father for some little time before he abandoned it for the philosophical teachings, without pay, to which he devoted the rest of his vigorous life. He was always financially poor, caring little for money, and striving to reduce his needs to primary essentials, to be as near like the gods (who require nothing) as possible. But he was none the less a citizen of Athens (the Athenians were neither snobs nor prudes), and served in this

capacity as senator and juryman (dicast). His soldiering has already been mentioned. He is generally described as having twice married; his first wife, Xantippe, having been somewhat of a shrew. Since Socrates deserted his domestic duties as he did all other things that occupied the attention of ordinary men, he probably suffered little from Xantippe's irascibility, although his married life is usually recorded as unhappy.

George Grote, in his *History of Greece*, summarizes the man thus: "Three peculiarities distinguish the man. 1. His long life passed in contented poverty, and in public, apostolic dialectics. 2. His strong religious persuasion, or belief, of acting under a mission and signs from the gods; especially his dæmon, or genius; the special religious warning of which he believed himself to be frequently the subject. 3. His great intellectual originality, both of subject and of method, and his power of stirring and forcing the germ of inquiry and ratiocination in others. Though these three characteristics were so blended in Socrates that it is not easy to consider them separately; yet, in each respect, he stood distinguished from all Greek philosophers before or after him."

The second point, that of Socrates' special genius, deserves elaboration. A divine intervention, or inner premonition, always stopped him when he was about to do something at variance with his true destiny—or so he believed and often stated. This "mantic" sign forbade him to enter public life, for example. He came to have such faith in it that when

it did not manifest itself he was confident that his course was the right one. Thus, when he faced death and could have escaped, since the "sign" did not warn him, he assumed that his death was ordained and approved by the gods. The possession of this special favor, probably no more than a psychological premonition arising out of a combination of desires and beliefs (but a battleground of authorities on the philosopher and his life), was one of the points on which Socrates was accused and obliged to face the death penalty.

4. SIGNIFICANCE.

"He was thoroughly convinced of the inherent vice and hollowness of what passed for knowledge at that time." Compared with the Sophists, his object "was to reform what they were content merely to formulate." Socrates was the source of that intellectual vigor which brought into being the idealistic philosophy of Plato, his pupil, and through Plato, the cold and logical principles of Aristotle. He was a beginning and an inspiration; he was killed, says H. G. Wells, "for disturbing people's minds," and yet "the disturbance of people's minds went on in spite of his condemnation. His young men carried on his teachings."

Socrates has been called the world's greatest cross-examiner. His dialectical methods have become immortal—by asking a series of questions, and scarcely making a statement himself, he was enabled to refute arguments and prove propositions out of his opponents' own mouths. This was a striving toward definition, some-

thing that men had never thought of before. They used the commonest terms, such as holiness, love, right, justice, and so on, daily, with the glib assurance of familiarity, but when called upon by Socrates for definitions, the best of them were at a loss to reply. This much of Socrates is of especial importance today, as it was then. He serves to make us gird up our mental loins, and look to our verbal weapons with a keen eye of appraisal. Do we, after all, know much better than he what love is? Or piety? Or justice?

Will Durant, in his *Guide to Plato* (Little Blue Book No. 159), which, by the way, makes an excellent supplementary text to any study of Socrates, summarizes thus: ". . . the great Socrates himself . . . like the Sophists was a perambulating teacher of wisdom; but with sly modesty he called himself not *sophistes* (one versed in wisdom) but simply *philosophos* (a lover of wisdom); he was a pursuer rather than a possessor of truth; 'one thing I know,' he would say, 'and that is that I know nothing'. Yet he was decisive enough in his way; and when it came to political theory he was even more ruthless and fearless in his criticism of democracy than any of the Sophists; he was never tired of laughing at the democratic demagogues—'they go ringing on in long harangue, like brazen pots which, when they are struck, continue to sound until some one puts his hand on them'. Only the intelligent should rule, said Socrates; and unfortunately, intellects are not as numerous as noses"

II. THE TRIAL.

1. ACCUSATION.

The wording of the indictment is given in Diogenes Laertius' *Life of Socrates*, Bohn's translation: "Meletus, the son of Meletus of Pittea, impeaches Socrates, son of Sophroniscus of Alopece: Socrates is guilty inasmuch as he does not believe in the gods which the state worships, but introduces other strange deities: he is also guilty, inasmuch as he corrupts the young men; and the punishment he has incurred is death".

These charges are analyzed and answered by Xenophon in his *Memorabilia*. Of the first count, that of not paying respect to state-recognized gods, Xenophon acquits Socrates in several ways: "no one ever either saw Socrates doing, or heard him saying, anything impious or profane"; and in another place (Book I, Chapter 3), "he evidently acted and spoke in conformity with the answer which the priestess of Apollo gives to those who inquire how they ought to proceed with regard to a sacrifice, to the worship of their ancestors, or to any such matter; for the priestess replies that *they will act piously, if they act in agreement with the law of their country;* and Socrates both acted in this manner himself and exhorted others to act similarly; and such as acted in any other way he regarded as doing what was not to the purpose, and guilty of folly". But Socrates did take exception to some of the polytheistic myths that were a part of

the Greek religion—"It was incredible, he argued, that the gods should have committed acts which would be disgraceful in the worst of men". On some such statement as this, doubtless, Meletus based his charge.

As for introducing new divinities, Socrates' only offense was the acknowledgment of the genius or special premonition which warned him of danger, and this, indeed, was supposedly a personal manifestation to Socrates of the recognized gods, so that his obedience to it was in itself a proof of his belief in those gods.

The charge of corrupting the young is more serious, for, although Socrates was certainly not guilty, he could very easily be made to appear guilty in the eyes of men he had offended. Xenophon divides this charge into four parts: (1) that Socrates inveighed against established institutions, (2) that Critias and Alcibiades, who had become both dissipated and corrupt, were among his early pupils, (3) that he influenced children against their parents, and (4) that he quoted immoral passages from the poets. That he did none of these things, Xenophon goes on to prove, and to prove satisfactorily, at least to modern judges.

Socrates never endorsed the Athenian practice of electing political officials by lot, any more than he would have endorsed a similar practice of selecting physicians, sculptors, or military strategists by lot: to hold public office a man should be appointed according to his ability. In this, however, he spoke against established institutions.

Critias and Alcibiades were, truly enough, numbered among Socrates' pupils at one time. The philosopher had saved the nearly worthless life of the latter at the battle of Potidea, and Alcibiades, when he was not too drunk, was loyal to Socrates insofar as he could be without relinquishing his extravagant orgies of pleasure. Critias ultimately became one of the Thirty Tyrants that in 404 B. C. oppressed Athens, but he, because of severe criticism from Socrates, had become the philosopher's bitter enemy. That but two of Socrates' pupils should have turned out so badly, and these two, indeed, were corrupted after they left his company, was hardly a just basis for the charge of corrupting the young.

Xenophon comments thus: "'But,' said the accuser, 'Critias and Alcibiades, after having been associates of Socrates, inflicted a great number of evils on the state; for Critias was the most avaricious and violent of all that composed the oligarchy, and Alcibiades was the most intemperate, insolent, and turbulent of all those in the democracy'. For whatever evil they did the state, I shall make no apology; but as to their intimacy with Socrates, I will state how it took place. These two men were by nature the most ambitious of all the Athenians, and wished that everything should be done by their means, and that they themselves should become the most celebrated of all men. But they knew that Socrates lived with the utmost contentment on very small means, that he was most abstinent from every kind of pleasure, and that he swayed those with whom he

conversed just as he pleased by his arguments; and, seeing such to be the case, and being such characters as they have just been stated to be, whether will anyone say that they sought his society from a desire to lead such a life as Socrates led, and to practice such temperance as he practiced, or from an expectation, that if they associated with him, they would become eminently able to speak and act? . . . I know, too, that those men exercised self-control as long as they conversed with Socrates, not from fear lest they should be fined or beaten by him, but from a persuasion at the time that it was best to observe such conduct".

That he persuaded children to disobey their parents is but half of the probable truth. It was Socrates' aim to do good, and one way was to show how every so-called pupil of his might come to "know himself" and his abilities. Thus, if a boy's father decided that the son should become a tanner, and Socrates was able to show the boy that his true destiny was to become, instead, an orator, it might be said that he had "corrupted the young" by teaching this lad to disobey his father. But if he taught the son to be wiser than the father, was it not a benefit rather than an evil? Indeed, should he be blamed for it?

He was known to quote the poets often, but the chances are very much in favor of his use of such quotations being misunderstood. Even if he did utilize an occasional taboo passage, it was hardly an offense deserving of the serious charge of "corrupting the young."

Under these circumstances, it would appear

that the prosecution had no strength. But it must be remembered that the perspective of today was not that of Athens in 399 B. C. To those on the scene, Socrates must have seemed, undoubtedly did seem, guilty of at least a portion of the charges brought against him. He was an innovator, and of all such the populace is suspicious. It has been demonstrated, too, that he was of a political persuasion opposed to that of Meletus and his fellow-accusers, so that "politics," even in that far-away time, entered into the case. Again, he had made enemies by his incisive questions into the nature of this and the nature of that—a man is not to be held up as an example of the Ignorant masquerading in the garb of the Knowing, and then be expected to walk away gladdened thereby. And many were the men whose sham knowledge Socrates exposed before their friends, and before their enemies, too. To scores of these the experience was galling in the extreme.

Consider, too, that Socrates' defense, which follows, was not calculated to soothe any of the ire that had been aroused against him. Had he made any consistent attempt to plead his case—which, of course, being the man he was, he would not do—he might have been acquitted.

2. DEFENSE.

Socrates' defense has come down to us in the words of Plato's *Apology* (the origin of Xenophon's similar work, mentioned in the Introduction, is doubtful, and it cannot be depended upon as an authority). It is an inter-

esting speculation whether the words as Plato has recorded them were actually spoken by Socrates, but the balance of opinion seems to favor that they were not. By his own admission, Socrates prepared no definite speech, and this speech of Plato's shows no little preparation. On the other hand, it is intensely characteristic of Socrates, and on that score it presents an authentic portrait of the philosopher at his trial. The arguments used, or some very similar to them, were doubtless used by Socrates in his real defense. Quibble is idle, anyway, for Plato is our only source.

The versions of the *Apology* and the *Dialogues* which are presented in this booklet are all hig[illegible] abridged and adapted, due to the limitat[illegible] of space, and follow the exact form of neith[illegible] the original Greek nor of any one translation. The argument and development have always been preserved, and it is hoped that the spirit, the sense, or the character of the speakers has nowhere been lost. The [illegible] than a[illegible] en to offer something more [illegible] mary, and much less voluminou than the[illegible] plete texts.

The fir[illegible] part of Plato's *Apology* gives Sc rates' def[illegible] e before the verdict:

"I cann[illegible] know, Athenians, what impres[illegible] have made upon you; indeed, so plausible were their arguments, though they spoke not one word of truth, that I did forget myself. And the worst of their lies was their warning to you not to be influenced by my eloquence—when they must surely be confuted the moment I opened my mouth to

speak. For I am no orator, unless he be eloquent who speaks truth: even then I am not the orators they are, for they lie. I shall give you, Athenians, the whole truth in simple words and in arguments to which I am accustomed and which I have not prepared in advance. Do not be surprised if I speak in the manner I have often used in the streets of Athens, for I am a stranger to this place and its customs—though I am, indeed, no less than seventy years of age, in all that time I have never before had a lawsuit. Give all your attention, Athenians, to deciding whether my plea is just or not, for such is the purpose of a judge."

Socrates endeavors first to refute the charges of those people who, throughout his later life, have been building up a well-defined prejudice against him and his teachings, the prejudice that emboldened Meletus to make his accusation. To do this, he announces that the oracle at Delphi has pronounced him the wisest of living men. Doubting this, he went the rounds of the supposed wise men of Athens, seeking to discover some one of them really wiser than himself, and finding only men who thought they were wise and yet knew nothing. Therefore, he concludes, the oracle means that in realizing his own ignorance he is wiser than any other man. This quizzing of the wise men earned him much enmity, for men do not like to be made ridiculous before their fellows. His methods converted many young men who went about imitating him, so that the men whose sham knowledge was thus exposed be-

gan to circulate calumnies against him, asserting that he corrupted the young.

Socrates then turns to Meletus. He shows that Meletus' charge that he, Socrates, has been corrupting the young is of no consequence, by asking, first, who makes the young better? Meletus is unwarily led to assert that every man in Athens, save only Socrates, makes the young better. This is obviously absurd. He asks, second, whether men prefer to receive good or evil from their fellows, and whether wickedness is not to be expected from a wicked man and goodness from a good man. Meletus admits that men prefer to receive good, and that good always comes from the hands of good men. Socrates thereupon insists that he has been interested, for his own sake, in doing good to the young that he may receive good in return, or if he has corrupted them, he has done so unintentionally, and is not liable to the charge Meletus has brought against him. Socrates suggests further that Meletus perhaps believes he corrupts the young by teaching them new ideas about the gods. Meletus agrees. Socrates elicits from Meletus an accusation that he, Socrates, is an atheist—that he believes in no gods whatsoever. This is refuted by the demonstration that a man who believes in human things must believe human beings exist, or, similarly, that a man who believes spiritual things exist, must believe in spirits, or demons—the Greek word *daimon* having no malicious sense. Socrates, in the indictment, was accused of teaching different gods, or things about the gods, hence

he must believe that gods exist, and cannot be an atheist. Socrates goes on to state that his defense requires no lengthy argument, and that if he is convicted, it will not be by Meletus or his associates, but by this nameless prejudice which has sprung up in the minds of many Athenians—the suspicion with which all men regard an innovator among them.

"Perhaps some will ask me, 'Are you not ashamed, Socrates, of leading a life that may now bring you to your death?' But I answer them, 'Do you think any truly honest and virtuous man would balance life and death, or consider anything save whether he acts rightly or wrongly?'

"Consider, Athenians, how I risked death at Potidea and Amphipolis and Delium [battles in which Socrates served as a hoplite] as a soldier ought. Should I then, when it became my lot to live a life of philosophy, fear death as a consequence of my discourses, when I did not fear it as a consequence of my fighting? Especially since my life was ordered by the very gods; indeed, had I allowed fear of death to dissuade me, then might I truly have been accused of not believing in the gods or their oracles. And who knows whether death is an evil to be feared, whether it is not perhaps among the greatest goods? What I do not know, I do not claim to know, so why should I, for fear of that of which I know nothing, disobey the mandates of the gods? Even, Athenians, if you should release me on condition that I cease my philosophy, on pain of death, it could not stop me. In face of this I would say, 'Men

of Athens, listen to Anytus or not, acquit me or acquit me not, but remember that I will do nothing else, not if I were to die a hundred deaths!'

"Yet a little, Athenians; I beseech you, hear me to the end. If you put me to death, you will harm me less than you harm yourselves; indeed, Meletus cannot harm me, for it is beyond the power of a bad man to injure a good man. I plead not for myself now, but for you, lest you sin against that divine oracle which has sent me among you. For surely I, who care nothing for the properties or benefits of this earth, as my life amply indicates, must be the true agent of God. Your State is as some great and noble steed, grown languid with long resting, and I am the buzzing insect to incite it to worthy action. If you dispose of me, it will be hard to find another so unselfish and sacrificing, to fill my place. Do not be angry with me, Athenians, for saying this: it is merely as I see the matter, and as I have said, I have no reason to distort the facts. You are displeased with me for arousing you from your lethargy, as any sleeper hates the noise that wakes him. But my motives have been quite disinterested—you all know that I accept no payment for my philosophy. Even Meletus has not dared to bring forward a witness to contradict that. My own poverty is sufficient evidence.

"No doubt you have wondered, though, why I have always taught in private, and have never come before you to argue in public life, mayhap in the Assembly. Remember, if it please

you, the divine sign that governs all my actions, which never urges me to any course, and yet forbids anything that may do me harm. This sign, a divine visitation from heaven itself, warned me against public life. Surely you can see, Athenians, that politics would have been fatal to me ere this: no man can, with impunity, openly denounce the frailties and injustices of the State. To fight for true justice, and live, a man must proceed privately.

"Nor shall I let this rest on mere words. You value deeds. I shall give you deeds. When I held the only office I ever had in the State, that of Senator, and those generals were tried for deserting the crews of their ships, after the battle of Arginusæ, in a body, which according to the laws of Athens was illegal, I was the only President to oppose you—the fury of all Athens was unable to shake me in my firm resolve not to do wrong."

At Arginusæ, one of the last naval engagements of the Peloponnesian War, the accused generals left men to die, supposedly, when they might have at least rescued their bodies, and, the rites of burial being especially sacred among the ancients, the citizens were highly incensed and visited stern punishment upon them, in spite of Socrates. To understand the position Socrates held, it must be remembered that the Athenian Senate was made up of 500 citizens, elected annually by lot, 50 from each of the 10 tribes. Those from each tribe held what was called the Prytany, or conduct of business, for periods of 35 days each, and 10 of each 50 were known as Presidents, holding

the positions for 7 days at a time. It was the duty of these Presidents to examine every bill or motion to determine whether it accorded with existing law before submitting it to a vote in the Assembly. One of the Presidents, called Epistates, presided over the Senate and Assembly each day, and for that day only, and it was his particular duty to put valid questions to a vote. On the day that Socrates happened to be Epistates, the conviction of the generals came up, and he refused to put it to a vote. The next day, however, the succeeding Epistates did not hesitate.

"In addition, during the rule of the Thirty [Tyrants, 404 B. C.], when a group of five, I among them, was called upon to bring Leon from Salamis that he might be put to death, those four feared death for themselves if they disobeyed, and performed the mission, but as for me, I went home. Not then, or ever, Athenians, has the fear of death ever interfered with my sense of right and wrong, or my actions toward the right. That last act of insubordination might very easily have cost me my life, had not the oligarchy been overthrown soon after.

"But had I taken such a defiant attitude in a public career, I would long since have been done away with, Athenians, as you know. Through all my life, public or private, I have never yielded to any man against right and justice, be he even one of those my accusers call my pupils. For I have taught no man. Only this have I done: allowed any man, rich or poor, low or high, to listen to me and dis-

cuss with me, answer my questions, or ask me questions to be answered, and all this whether he could pay me or no, and none ever did pay me. If any have suffered harm from such proceedings, the blame surely is not mine. I never promised instruction, and if any man has the effrontery to say that he has ever heard one word from my lips in private which I would not have said to all the world had it paused to listen, I tell you that he does not speak the truth.

"And you wonder why men find enjoyment in my company. It is that same exposure of false knowledge, Athenians, that I told you of a little back. Surely it is amusing to see a man who thinks he knows much discover he knows nothing at all. And this, as I believe, God has commanded me to do, in dreams and oracles and other means of communication between heaven and earth. It is the truth, and not hard to verify. If I had corrupted young men, why are not some of them here, grown older and vengeful, perhaps, to accuse me? Or why are not some of their kinsmen at hand to tell of my treacherous teachings? But those who are here, are here to tell you I am innocent of such a charge.

"Thus ends my defense, Athenians. There are those among you who may be surprised, disappointed even, that I have not pleaded with you, supplicated you with tears in my eyes, in behalf of my wife and children, that I did not bring my sons even into this courtroom to touch you with merciful compassion. My reasons for not doing all these things are

honorable: they concern my honor and yours. For so to influence you, against the better judgment of your reason, is to use stratagems in the place of truth, to make women of our men, and to soil the purity of the honor of Athens.

"To win you by entreaties, indeed, were to accuse myself of that impiety for which Meletus has brought me here. If I did not believe in the gods, I should attempt, perhaps, to win your favor by entreaty, and not by the true judgment of this court. But it is far from being like this, my good Athenians; I believe, as I can say not one of my accusers believes, and to you and to God I commit myself to be judged as is best for you and for me."

3. VERDICT.

Socrates is found guilty by a vote of 281 to 220, showing that his case is by no means as bad as might have been expected. The second part of the *Apology* gives his speech after the verdict:

"Your verdict, Athenians, scarcely distresses me at all, and for many reasons. Indeed, I had not expected the vote to be so close—had but thirty more of you turned in my favor I surely would have been acquitted. At any rate, I seem to have escaped Meletus, for it is certain that had not Anytus and Lycon also come forward to accuse me, Meletus would have been fined for not obtaining a fifth part of the votes. [To prevent men with very poor cases from bringing action, a fine of 1000 drachmæ was imposed if the prosecutor did not get a fifth of the votes in his favor.]

"So Meletus proposes death as a penalty.

Very well. And you must know my counter-penalty? [In the Athenian court the accused had the privilege of suggesting an alternative to the penalty proposed by the accuser, and the dicasts chose between them.] Naturally, it should be based on what I deserve, should it not? What, then, do I deserve for abandoning the things most men care for—public life, family life, money-making, and such—to devote my time to men privately, persuading them to think of themselves before their affairs, to think of what they are, and what the city is, rather than what they have or what the city has. For this I should receive not a penalty but a reward, men of Athens. A public benefactor such as I am should receive no less than a public maintenance in the Prytaneum [colloquially, the Hall of Presidents] and I deserve such a place far more than the mere winner of a chariot-race, who only makes you seem happy, while I make you really happy: he does not need it, and I do. Such, Athenians, is what I can be said to deserve.

"I do not speak thus from pride, citizens of Athens. I am convinced that I have never wronged any man intentionally, but because the time I have with you is so short I may not, probably shall not, be able to convince you of that. Being so sure of this, I can hardly suggest a means of wronging myself, and to propose a punishment where I deserve a reward would be to wrong myself. But what of Meletus' penalty, you say? I have told you that I know not whether death is good or bad: to accept imprisonment or a fine I know to be bad, and we should surely be governed by what we know. Shall I propose exile? No, for if the men of Athens fear me and seek to banish me, men of other lands will do likewise; the young, at least, will listen to me, and their elders will

drive me away, or if I refuse to talk to the young, they will enlist their elders against me for revenge. Certainly I could not suffer exile and agree to hold my peace; though I can scarcely convince you of it, such is the truth—if I live, I must continue my examination into virtue and the truths of life. Were I rich, I might propose a fine; to suggest one within my means would be to name one mina [roughly, $20]; but my friends here, Plato, and Crito, and Critobulus, and Apollodorus, beg me to suggest thirty minæ, and they will stand surety for the payment. Though I am not accustomed to think myself deserving of punishment, I fix my counter-penalty, Athenians, at this sum."

4. SENTENCE.

Socrates is condemned to death. Logically, the Athenians could do little else, and, to make matters worse, the old philosopher's speech after the verdict turned many of his 220 votes against him—he made it clear that nothing save death could subdue him. The third part of the *Apology* gives his reply to the sentence of death:

"After all, Athenians, you but hasten matters a little—had you waited, I, with my seventy years, might have departed hence without your help. Now you but earn for yourselves the name of the Murderer of Socrates the Wise, from all who seek to find wickedness in your city—they, certainly, will call me wise whether I am so or not. If you think I have been convicted because I lacked arguments, you are more than wrong. What I lacked was boldness, audacity to appeal to you with weeping and wailing, men of Athens. It is far better to die worthily, than to earn one's life unworthily, for many are the ways to escape death here, or

on the field of battle, for such men as will accept any and every way. What it is hard to escape is wickedness—indeed, I find myself overtaken by wickedness in this very court of Athens, for you, citizens, will go forth sentenced, not to death as I am, but to the banner of injustice and evil.

"I shall now prophesy to you, men of Athens, for, since I am about to die, to foretell the future is in my power. You shall not escape the consequences of this deed, Athenians, however much you may think so. Men will come after you to reproach you, younger men, whose accusations will be very hard to bear. You cannot escape blame by putting men to death; no, for the only and sure way is not to silence reproaches, but to live a life so perfect that it is above reproach. To you who have condemned me, then, I give this, my prophecy.

"To you who voted to acquit me, I have more to say. Remain with me until I go hence: we have much to speak of together. I want, above all, to explain to you what has happened to me. A wonderful thing it is, my judges—for now I may call you judges—a very wonderful thing has befallen me. The warning that has often and often come to me in life, that spiritual sign you all know of, has not this time restrained me. Not this morning on my way here, and at no time during my speaking—and it often warned me at other times when I was about to speak—has it forbade me to proceed. This means one thing only: what has happened to me is not harm, but good. This is a proof indeed, for if harm was to befall me, the sign would surely warn me.

"If you yet doubt, let us consider death. It must be one of two things: either an eternal sleep with loss of all consciousness, or a change or journey of the soul from one world to an-

other. If it is the first, a dreamless sleep, I say to you that it is well. Think well—select the night of slumber you remember above all others, and surely it is the night of unbroken rest, untroubled by dreams, undisturbed by consciousness of any sort. Those nights are few and cherished: even the King of Persia would find them of rare remembrance. If death is like that, surely it is no evil, for all eternity would scarcely seem a single night.

"But if death is that other, a migration into some land where all the dead have gone before us, what then? It is as well, my friends, for there we would find not the self-styled judges of this earth, but the true judges, Minos and Rhadamanthus, Æacus and Triptolemus [reputed judges of the dead in Hades], and all the sons of the gods who behaved rightly in life. We would find and converse with Orpheus and Hesiod and Homer. Would this be ill, my friends? I will die a hundred times to attain such a blessing! For me, especially, 'twould be a pleasure, to meet there Palamedes and Ajax, and compare their experiences with my own. I could go among them as I have gone among the men of this world, seeking out truth among them, and questioning and querying away the shells of sham knowledge. This would be happiness, indeed, my friends; to send a man to such a land by condemning him to death is far from evil.

"When you, my judges, face death, remember that no evil can befall a good man in life or in death. The good are never forgotten by the gods; my own fate is not one of chance, for the divine sign has not warned me that it is evil. Thus it is that I cannot be angry with those who have condemned me; yet because they

think and intend to do me harm thereby, they are to be blamed.

"One request I will make. When my sons grow up, if they prefer riches to virtue, if they have the appearance of being what they are not, reprove them and punish them as I have reproved and punished you. If you but do this, both myself and my sons shall have received the highest justice at your hands.

"Now the time is at hand: we must go, I to die, you to live, which of us to the better state is known only to God."

Xenophon comments thus: "But if anyone thinks that he was convicted of falsehood with regard to his Dæmon, because sentence of death was pronounced on him by the judges although he said that the Dæmon admonished him what he ought and what he ought not to do, let him consider, in the first place, that he was already so advanced in years, that he must have ended his life, if not then, at least not long after; and, in the next, that he relinquished only the most burdensome part of life, in which all feel their powers of intellect diminished, while, instead of enduring this, he acquired great glory by proving the firmness of his mind, pleading his cause above all men, with the greatest regard to truth, ingenuousness, and justice, and bearing his sentence at once with the utmost resignation and the utmost fortitude."

III. THE PENALTY.

1. INTERIM.

"It is indeed acknowledged that no man, of all that are remembered, ever endured death with greater glory; for he was obliged to live thirty days after his sentence, because the Delian festival happened in that month, and

the law allowed no one to be publicly put to death until the sacred deputation should return from Delos; and during that time he was seen by all his friends living in no other way than at any preceding period; and, let it be observed, throughout all the former part of his life, he had been admired beyond all men for the cheerfulness and tranquillity with which he lived. How could anyone have died more nobly than this? Or what death could be more honorable than that which any man might most honorably undergo? Or what death could be happier than the most honorable? Or what death more acceptable to the gods than the most happy?" (From Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, as are also all the preceding passages from Xenophon, all being quoted from Rev. J. S. Watson's translation.)

The festival mentioned was an annual religious rite of the Athenians, in honor of Apollo—the island of Delos was Apollo's legendary birthplace—supposedly in thanksgiving-commemoration of the expedition of Theseus to Crete, where he killed the Minotaur and released Athens from the annual tribute of virgin youths and maidens. While the voyage was in progress no criminals were punished in Athens, and, happening at this time, the trip gave Socrates an additional month of life.

In the words of Phædo, in Plato's dialogue of that name, as he explains the matter to his friend, Echecrates (Henry Cary's translation): "An accidental circumstance happened in his favor, Echecrates; for the poop of the ship which the Athenians send to Delos, chanced to be crowned on the day before the trial. It is the ship, as the Athenians say, in which Theseus formerly conveyed the fourteen boys and girls to Crete, and saved both them and

himself. They, therefore, made a vow to Apollo on that occasion, as it is said, that if they were saved they would every year despatch a solemn embassy to Delos; which from that time to the present, they send yearly to the god. When they begin the preparation for this solemn embassy, they have a law that the city shall be purified during this period, and that no public execution shall take place until the ship has reached Delos, and returned to Athens: and this occasionally takes a long time, when the winds happen to impede their passage. The commencement of the embassy is when the priest of Apollo has crowned the poop of the ship. And this was done, as I said, on the day before the trial: on this account Socrates had a long interval in prison between the trial and his death."

Plato has recorded the conversation of Socrates on the day before his death in the dialogue known as the *Crito*. The scene is the prison cell of Socrates.

Socrates. Why are you here at such an hour, Crito? Isn't it very early? How early is it?

Crito. It is just dawn.

Socrates. I am surprised that the jailer admitted you.

Crito. I have come so often, Socrates, that he knows me.

Socrates. Did you just arrive, Crito.

Crito. No; I have been here some little while, amazed at the tranquillity of your sleep. It convinces me, Socrates, of the happy temper in which you have always lived.

Socrates. But why came you so early?

Crito. To bring sad tidings, Socrates—sad, at least, for me and all your friends. The ship from Delos is all but returned. It will surely be in today, and tomorrow, Socrates, you must die.

Socrates. Yes, Crito. Let us hope it is for the best.

Crito. But, Socrates, my friend, I beg you to listen to my pleas and save yourself. If you die, I shall not only lose a very dear friend, but think, Socrates,—people will suppose I refused to aid you. The world will never believe we tried to save you, that you yourself would not yield.

Socrates. But, dearest Crito, what does their opinion matter? Those whose respect we value will know the truth.

Crito. Yet, Socrates, your present plight is a result of their power—the power of the majority to do harm.

Socrates. If they only could do the greatest harm, Crito, they could also do the greatest good. But they cannot make one brilliant or dull—they are controlled quite by chance.

Crito. Very well. But tell me, Socrates, are you concerned for us, lest your escape cause us to be punished, as your accomplices? Dismiss all such fears; many are the friends standing ready to buy agents and their silence with ample funds. My own fortune is at your service. And don't think that if you should escape you wouldn't know what to do with yourself. In many, many places men will love you, Socrates,—indeed, if you'll choose Thessaly, my friends there will esteem you and keep you safe.

Further, Socrates, you are merely aiding your enemies by laying down your life so meekly. You are deserting your sons. Whereas it is a father's duty to train his heirs, you are choosing the easier course. We are ashamed that you, a man cherishing virtue above all else, should have submitted from the very first when all—even the trial itself—might have been avoided. It gives your friends the appearance

of base cowardice. Consider—but there is no time: everything must be done tonight. To delay longer is folly. I beseech you, Socrates, do not say No.

Socrates. Ah, Crito, you are overwrought. What we must consider is whether we ought to do this thing or not. Because I face death is no excuse for me to distort reason. Let us look into the matter. We thinkers used to say, Crito, that of men's opinions some should be valued, and others not. Isn't this right? Since you are not to die, your judgment cannot be influenced. Tell me.

Crito. It is certainly right, Socrates.

Socrates. We should value the good opinions, and not the bad? Those of the wise are good, and of the foolish bad?

Crito. Of course.

Socrates. Suppose, then, that a man is learning gymnastics. Does he heed the voice of all men, or only the words of one man alone, his trainer?

Crito. Of his trainer only.

Socrates. Therefore he dreads the censure and yearns for the praise of that one man?

Crito. Naturally.

Socrates. He performs, eats, and behaves as that man directs, who knows what is right?

Crito. Of course.

Socrates. Good. But if he disobeys his trainer, and listens to the majority, who do not know—will he suffer for it?

Crito. Surely; he must suffer. His body will be injured.

Socrates. Quite right. Now is it not the same with everything else, with good and evil, ugliness and beauty, justice and injustice? Should we follow the opinion of the majority, or of that one, if there is such, who knows, and whom we ought to respect and fear above all

others? For if we disobey him, we shall harm that part of us which is strengthened by right and weakened by wrong. Is it not so?

Crito. It is, Socrates.

Socrates. Then if we destroy the wholesome in us by listening to the multitude, who do not understand the right of such matters, are we not crippled? And this is the body, is it not? Can we live properly when the body is maimed?

Crito. No, surely not, Socrates.

Socrates. Do we value that part of us which is concerned with right and wrong less than our body? Or more?

Crito. Much more, Socrates.

Socrates. Therefore you were wrong in the first place, Crito, when you said that we should heed the voice of the multitude rather than of him who knows what is good and what is bad. Though the majority might still put us to death.

Crito. Surely it might.

Socrates. True. Yet that does not change matters. Should we desire most living well, or just living?

Crito. Living well, most certainly.

Socrates. Which is the same as living honorably and rightly?

Crito. The very same.

Socrates. Then our question is not whether I am to die or to live, but whether it is right or wrong for me to escape. If it is right, I shall go with you; if it is wrong, I shall remain. All your considerations of expense, reputation, and the training of children, Crito—do you not think they are properly considerations for that multitude which sentences men to death, and would, perhaps, if they could, bring them back to life again?

Crito. I believe you are right, Socrates. But what shall we do?

Socrates. We shall discuss it together, dear good Crito. Now, should we never do wrong, or may we do wrong under some circumstances and not under others? We always used to say that it was never right to do evil, Crito. Doesn't this stand—whether the majority thinks so or not, and no matter what we suffer, should we not always do right and never commit any injustice or evil?

Crito. Most assuredly.

Socrates. Nor should we return evil for evil, since we should never do wrong at all.

Crito. So it appears.

Socrates. And it is not right to harm anyone, ever? The world is mistaken to repay wrong with wrong?

Crito. Certainly, Socrates. Wrong is always wrong.

Socrates. Think carefully, dear Crito. Few men believe that to return evil for evil is wrong. And there is no halfway point, either, for those who believe as we do must hold in contempt those who revenge themselves for harm done them. I still believe that to return evil for evil is very wrong, and never right. Do you, Crito?

Crito. I agree with you, Socrates. Go on.

Socrates. Listen closely: if I escape, am I not injuring some who least of all should be harmed? Are we not evading what we have agreed to be just and right?

Crito. I do not understand.

Socrates. Suppose, then, that as we were escaping, or running away, the State should appear and say to us: "What are you doing, Socrates? Do you mean to overthrow this city and its laws? Or do you think a government can exist when its judgments are held so lightly?" What should we answer, dear good Crito?

Shall I say that the State has injured me, that it has condemned me unjustly?

Crito. Surely, Socrates, that is what you will say.

Socrates. Then may the State reply: "Did you not swear to abide by the decisions of the city? Is not the State your true father, since under its laws your father married your mother, and it bade your father protect you and educate you? Since you are our child, our servant, do you think you can strike at us, Socrates? Can a child place himself on a par with his father, or a slave return the lashes of his master? Have you a right, then, to do to us whatever we do to you, to destroy us because we destroy you? You, the lover of virtue, should have the wisdom to see that the State is above all else, for in war or in peace one must do as the State requires, before even the entreaties or commands of one's father or mother. If it is wrong to retaliate on one's father, surely it is more wrong to retaliate where that higher authority, the State, is concerned." Is not this so? What shall we say, Crito?

Crito. It seems all as you relate, Socrates.

Socrates. And the State may go on: "You know, Socrates, that when a man has reached maturity and has seen how the State administers its laws, he is free to depart if he dislikes the State and its methods. If he stays, therefore, he binds himself to abide by the State's decisions. Or, should he disagree, he is free to persuade the State otherwise, in the open court. If he cannot or does not persuade, he must submit, by his own promise in remaining in the city, for if he disobeys, he breaks that promise.

"And you, Socrates, above all other men, would be guilty of breaking faith if you ran away. Never have you left Athens, scarce even

on a pilgrimage, so well have you liked our city. All your life you have remained, content to abide by the city's laws: you married and brought up children here, showing how much you approved. Besides, had you wished so earnestly to depart, you might have suggested exile at your trial, and thus have gained the State's consent for what you now seek to do unlawfully. Yet you expressed a willingness to die, preferring death to exile. Is the State right or wrong, then, in assuming that you have agreed to obey its laws and abide by its judgments?" What are we to say to that, Crito? Do we not agree?

Crito. We agree.

Socrates. The State, indeed, could say further: "How ridiculous you would appear, Socrates, if you were to escape! To whatever city you came for shelter, if that city were governed by good laws, might you not be regarded as a palpable danger to their stability? Could you go there and discourse on virtue and justice as you have done here, when you yourself could not abide by legal justice? After your seventy years of life here, without complaint, how base it would appear for you to evade the laws in order to save a life of which so little yet remains to you! And by so doing, you would confirm the crime of which you have been accused, Socrates, for a man who evades the laws may well be a corrupter of the youth. And your children—shall you take them away to be educated in a strange land? If you die, your friends will care for them.

"Listen, then, Socrates. Do not value your children, your life, or anything above righteousness and justice, so that when you come into the next world you will have that much in your favor. It cannot make you or your friends permanently any happier for you to

escape this, the State's decision. If you go, you will render evil for evil, striking back at the State that has struck at you, and breaking your own promise to that State to do as it might bid you. Therefore you must not allow Crito to persuade you against us"

These things, dear good Crito, I seem to hear as some divine music in my ears. I can listen to naught else. So, as long as the matter appears so to me, you speak but in vain. Still, Crito, if you think you may yet change me, say on.

Crito. No, Socrates, good friend. There is nothing more for me to say.

Socrates. Let it rest, then, Crito, for this is the way God has ordained for us.

2. DEATH.

In a painting of Jacques Louis David, the death of Socrates is depicted with vivid dignity. It is a sad, but by no means a tearful or hysterical scene. Four of the philosopher's friends have turned away their heads or covered their eyes; one sits stolidly apart. Of the others, one old man appears somewhat distraught; one man, seated, is vaguely alarmed and half-remonstrating; two youths are intently watchful. Socrates himself is perched calmly erect on the edge of his couch, in a sitting posture, one leg carelessly extended, the other with toes braced against the prison floor. All are garbed in the simple Athenian chiton, or tunic, which is merely an oblong of woolen cloth large enough to be wrapped about the body somewhat closely from the neck down to the knees, and is held together at the middle by a girdle; and two, at least, are wearing the outer cloak, or himation. Socrates' mantle has fallen to his waist, exposing his robust chest and shoulders, appearing sturdy as in the prime of life, for all

his seventy years. His right hand is stretched out to receive the cup of hemlock, and his left is pointing upward, reassuringly and encouragingly, to heaven. It is perhaps an occasion for thanks that the Fates, in the persons of the dicasts of Athens, enabled this man to die so nobly.

"In many respects the end of Socrates may indeed be regarded as a euthanasia. There was nothing like the shame of a public execution, or the horror of a violent death, to be endured. In privacy, amid a circle of friends and admirers, the cup of hemlock was to be drunk which would extinguish the vital powers, and that too at a period of life when of themselves they might soon have ceased. Such were the mitigating external circumstances; while inwardly there was 'the royal heart of innocence,' the high enthusiasm which has enabled so many to meet with cheerfulness a martyr's death, and the philosophic reason which entirely triumphed over the animal instincts, which saw things as a whole, and which counted the loss a gain. When Apollodorus, one of his disciples, said, 'I grieve most for this, Socrates, that I see you about to die undeservedly.' He answered, stroking the head of his pupil with a smile, 'My dearest Apollodorus, would you rather see me die deservedly?'" (From Sir Alexander Grant's *Xenophon*, J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia.)

On his last day in prison, Socrates indulged in the dialectic form of discourse which has become his monument. An imaginary transcription of his words is recorded by Plato in the *Phædo*.

The *Phædo* is a dialogue within a dialogue. It opens at Phlius, with Phædo telling Echecrates about Socrates' death, resulting finally in Phædo's reporting Socrates' entire conversation

during his last day of life. For present purposes it has been found advisable to change the dialogue to a more direct presentation than that used by Plato: the person of the narrator, or Phædo, being dispensed with almost entirely.

There is no doubt that Socrates was attended by several friends on this, his last day among them, and that he continued, perhaps in a slightly more serious vein than common, the discourses that he had developed throughout the latter years of his life. But the philosophy in Plato's *Phædo* is largely metaphysical, dealing with the immortality of the soul, and it presupposes in Socrates a knowledge of metaphysics and of the doctrine of Ideas, whereas the latter especially is purely Platonic. Thus Plato, using Socrates as the leading character in the dialogue, makes him at times serve as his own mouthpiece, eliciting from his lips not only Socratic but Platonic philosophy. This Socrates, but thirty days removed from the Socrates of the *Apology*, is quite a different personage. But the beauty and dignity of the death scene as here recorded by Plato is ample compensation for whatever liberties Plato has taken with the dialogue. No record of what was actually said by Socrates on this day survives.

Phædo begins by telling Echecrates of the sacred ship's pilgrimage to Delos, which delayed Socrates' execution for thirty days. The friends of Socrates, knowing by the ship's return that this day Socrates must die, have gathered before the prison early. When they are admitted, they find Socrates' wife, Xantippe, already there with a young son—though she is almost at once led away, weeping and lamenting. Socrates makes an observation on the inseparable qualities of pain and pleasure, rubbing his limbs from which the prison chains

have just been removed, and the dialogue has begun.

Socrates. Bid Evenus farewell from me, Cebes, and tell him to follow me as soon as he can, for, as is the will of the Athenians, I depart today.

Simmias. What strange advice for Evenus! If I know him, he'll not follow it.

Socrates. Is not Evenus a philosopher?

Simmias. So he seems.

Socrates. Then will he wish to die, though he will not take his own life, for that, they say, is wrong.

Cebes. What do you mean, Socrates? How can a man abhor suicide, and yet wish to die?

Socrates. Why, Cebes, have not you and Simmias heard about these things?

Cebes. Nothing definite.

Socrates. Well, I speak only from hearsay, but I may tell you what I have heard. Indeed, since I am about to journey hence, what better to do than talk of that next world while we linger here?

Cebes. Why is it wrong for a man to kill himself, Socrates?

Socrates. You may be surprised, yet this is an absolute law and without exception. These men, for whom it may be better to die, may not attain this good for themselves, but must await a benefactor from without.

Cebes. Indeed.

Socrates. I agree it does seem unreasonable, Cebes. They say that the reason is that men's bodies are prisons, from which the spirit must escape or be freed, and yet from which we may not free ourselves. This is not easy to understand, certainly. But it is clear that we belong to the gods, and that they protect us, is it not?

Cebes. That is clear

Socrates. If one of your slaves, say, killed himself without your order, or consent, you would be angry, would you not, and punish him if you could?

Cebes. Assuredly.

Socrates. Then, since we are possessions of the gods, it appears that we should not kill ourselves until the deities command us to do so, as they have virtually commanded me.

Cebes. This much is probable. But you said the philosopher must desire death. If we are indeed property of the gods, would it not be the greatest folly to seek to leave the service of those who protect us? Should a slave foolishly leave a kind and good master? The wise man ought to be loath to leave the company of those better than himself, hence, if what we have said is true, a wise man should grieve to die. 'Tis the fool should rejoice.

Socrates. Cebes is always examining arguments, and that is good. He is never convinced easily or at once.

Simmias. But there is something in what Cebes says. He levels his shaft at you, Socrates, who seem so ready to leave, not only the gods who care for you, but us who love you.

Socrates. You speak justly. I must defend myself, as in a court.

Simmias. Exactly.

Socrates. Then shall I try to do better than I did before the dicasts. I should also grieve to die, were I not to join an assembly of good gods and men who have died before me. I hope I am to go among good men, though I cannot be sure of that. But I am confident of some sort of existence, among gods who are good masters, and regard death not as an evil.

Simmias. Won't you share this belief with us? 'Twill serve to excuse your readiness to leave us.

Socrates. I'll try. But first Crito desires to speak.

Crito. The administrator of the poison, Socrates, says you must not talk too much, for talking heats people, and heat may counteract the poison.

Socrates. Let him warn: I will drink the poison twice or thrice if need be. I must turn now to our problem. A man who spends his life in philosophy deals, primarily, with the study of dying and death, so why, when death comes upon him at last, should he be grieved for that which has been his aim so long?

Simmias. You amuse me, Socrates, though this is no time for amusement. If the people heard you say this, they would surely agree that philosophers are eager to die, and further, that they know right well that philosophers deserve death.

Socrates. Right, Simmias, save that they do not know in what sense a philosopher desires death, or in what sense he deserves death, or what sort of death. Forget the people. Do we think death is anything?

Simmias. Of course we do.

Socrates. What? The separation of the soul from the body?

Simmias. Precisely that.

Socrates. Well, then, does a philosopher yearn for bodily pleasures, such as eating and drinking?

Simmias. Certainly not.

Socrates. Or for the passion of love?

Simmias. No, indeed.

Socrates. What of other sensual pleasures? Does he seek fine clothes and ornaments, or does he despise them, save in so far as necessity forces him to use them?

Simmias. The true philosopher despises them.

Socrates. Therefore a philosopher stands aloof from the body, and concerns himself with the soul.

Simmias. Yes.

Socrates. Or better, the philosopher frees his soul as far as possible from communion with the body?

Simmias. Surely.

Socrates. Doesn't the world, then, think such a man as good as dead, who does not care for such pleasures as come through the flesh?

Simmias. It thinks so, indeed.

Socrates. In the acquisition of wisdom, do not the bodily senses mislead us? Sight and hearing are imperfect, yet they are the most perfect of our senses. Do the senses impede the acquisition of wisdom, then?

Simmias. They seem to, Socrates.

Socrates. Then when does the soul achieve truth? Whenever she seeks it in company with the body, the body leads her astray. Must it not be by reasoning, therefore, that real truth will be discovered?

Simmias. Assuredly.

Socrates. The soul reasons best, though, when she is most divorced from the body and alone with herself? So the soul of the philosopher despises the body and flees from it?

Simmias. Clearly.

Socrates. Another point, Simmias. Is there such a thing as justice? Or as beauty or goodness?

Simmias. There are such things, certainly.

Socrates. Yet have you ever seen them with your eyes? Have you grasped them with your hands? Of all such absolutes—size, health, strength—the essences of things, divine truths,

have you or has anyone ever *felt* any? Must not a man reflect deeply to approach knowledge of them?

Simmias. Indeed, you are right.

Socrates. Now the body interferes with and hinders us on every side; the care of it holds us back, what with diseases fastening upon it; so that the only way to reach pure reason and pure truth is to get as far from the body and its needs as possible. Therefore, it appears that in death, when the soul and the body are separated and become distinct one from the other, the soul has the only real chance of attaining truth and knowledge. That is why I hope, when I reach the next world, Simmias, to acquire real wisdom. For death, as we agreed, sets the soul free from the body, and is not the true philosopher the only man who has a constant desire to free his soul thus and studies only for this purpose?

Simmias. So it would seem.

Socrates. Therefore he should rejoice when death comes to him, for he goes to that for which he has long yearned. Does not this prove that any man who grieves at the approach of death loves not wisdom but his body, loves not truth but wealth and the pleasures of the flesh?

Simmias. It does, Socrates.

Socrates. Then does not courage and does not true temperance belong to the philosopher, since temperance means control of the passions?

Simmias. Yes.

Socrates. But in other men courage and temperance are strange things, for they regard death as an evil, or if they accept it, they take it as the lesser of two evils. They are temperate, too, from a species of intemperance, for they abstain from certain pleasures only that

they may be held in the thrall of greater ones. Isn't this so, Simmias?

Simmias. It seems to be so, Socrates.

Socrates. But to barter pleasure for pleasure in pursuit of temperance and virtue is wrong, Simmias. The only true coin is wisdom, for where wisdom is, there virtue is also. True virtue is what might be called a purifying from the things of life, and temperance, and justice, and courage are the purification. Our mysteries [such as the Eleusinian Mysteries, for example, a kind of religious initiation into the blessings of the next world] are for no other purpose, it seems to me, and I have striven all my life to purify myself for the life to come. Such is my defense, and my excuse for being so ready to leave you, dear friends, for the next world.

Cebes. That is all very well, Socrates, but we fear lest the soul perish also, and vanish away like smoke. We must be persuaded first that the soul lives after the body.

Socrates. Let us examine the question. An ancient belief tells us that the living are born from the dead [Metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls], and if this be so, it proves that the dead souls must survive, or there would be nothing from which the ensuing living could be born. If we can prove this, then, do we not prove that the soul lives after the body?

Cebes. We do.

Socrates. Let us consider not only men, but all things that are multiplied or generated. It appears that everything is born from its opposite—for example, if a thing becomes greater, was it not at first less, or smaller? Or the reverse. to be smaller it must first be greater?

Cebes. Of course.

Socrates. Similarly, the weaker is born from

the stronger, the swifter from the slower, the worse from the better, the more just from the more unjust, until it is clear that all things are generated from their opposites?

Cebes. Quite clear.

Socrates. And since we may say that it is a universal law, though we may not always so express it, that opposites are generated always one from the other, in either direction, what may be said to be the opposite of life, as sleep is the opposite of being awake?

Cebes. Death, of course.

Socrates. Then, since life and death are opposites, they are generated one from the other?

Cebes. Certainly.

Socrates. Then living things can be said to be generated from the dead?

Cebes. I should think so.

Socrates. So that our souls do exist in another world?

Cebes. Apparently.

Socrates. Now of these two opposites one must be certain. Death is certain, is it not?

Cebes. Quite certain.

Socrates. So we must discover some opposite generation to correspond with dying. What must it be?

Cebes. To come to life again, assuredly.

Socrates. Or a generation from the dead to the living, as there was a generation from the living to the dead. But if this cycle were not complete, we should soon all be dead forever. For if wakefulness was not generated from sleep, but only sleep from wakefulness, very soon the entire world would be like Endymion, wrapt in an eternal sleep. Which proves, does it not, that the dead souls may survive to provide the opposite generation from dying?

Cebes. You certainly appear to speak truly.

Socrates. Besides, your doctrine that learning is only a form of recollection from the knowledge acquired in a previous existence, is an additional reason for believing the soul immortal.

Simmias. Explain, Cebes, what you mean. What are the proofs?

Cebes. Why, if you question men properly they can be made to answer correctly about things of which they can have no knowledge in this life, proving that they have a recollection of knowledge from a previous life. Socrates once did it by eliciting from a slave correct answers about geometry [recorded in Plato's *Meno*].

(Cebes is referring to the Platonic doctrine of Reminiscence, that all the knowledge we have is but a remembrance from some previous existence, and such a previous existence can only have been before we were born. The obvious conclusion is that our souls must have existed before they entered our bodies at birth. This doctrine supposes a gradual remembering throughout life, the recollections growing stronger and more pronounced with age—i. e., the acquisition of knowledge by learning. It is interesting to note that William Wordsworth, in his *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, exactly reverses this order, though utilizing the same doctrine; that is to say, he emphasizes the belief that the soul's pre-natal recollections are the most vivid in youth and gradually fade and weaken throughout life in a process, not of learning, but of forgetting.)

Simmias, after a pause, and Cebes agrees with him, objects that it has not been satisfactorily proved that the soul exists after the death of the body.

Socrates. Let us consider what sort of things may suffer dissolution and what may not, and

see to which class the soul belongs. Is it not the compound and complicated as opposed to the simple and divine that is liable to dispersion?

Cebes. I think so, indeed.

Socrates. If we return to previous matters a moment—do absolute things, such as equality, beauty, and so on, ever change at all or do they remain constant and uniform, never admitting of any change whatsoever?

Cebes. They must remain the same and unchanging, Socrates.

Socrates. But physical things, what of them? Such as beautiful garments, horses, and the like?

Cebes. The opposite, Socrates. They always change, never remaining the same for long.

Socrates. May we call one class visible to the senses, and the other invisible?

Cebes. Surely we may.

Socrates. And we are made up of, shall we say, body and soul?

Cebes. There is naught else.

Socrates. What, then, is the body most like, and the soul most like?

Cebes. Surely, the body is visible and the soul invisible.

Socrates. Now, from our previous and present arguments, what sort of existence would you say the soul was most like? And the body likewise?

Cebes. I should class the soul with the unchangeable, Socrates, and the body with the changeable.

Socrates. Let us see, then: we have agreed that the soul is most like that which is divine, and immortal, and intelligible, and uniform, and indissoluble, and unchangeable; while we have agreed on the other hand that the body is most like that which is human, and mortal,

and unintelligible, and multiform, and dissoluble, and changeable. If this be so, is not the body perishable and the soul wholly or nearly imperishable?

Cebes. It is indeed so.

Socrates. But the physical body, which is dissoluble, yet lasts for a long time. In Egypt, where bodies are embalmed and known as mummies, the form remains intact for thousands upon thousands of years. When it does decay into dust, some parts even then may almost be called immortal, they last so much longer than the rest—the bones, for instance. Is not all this true?

Cebes. Quite true.

Socrates. Then the soul, which is invisible, can hardly suffer this same decay, but is immortal, for when the soul is pure, and has been divorced as far as is possible from the sensual life of the flesh, then the soul, when freed, goes at once into the invisible land of the dead. But, on the other hand, if she has been defiled and besotted by the vile things of the flesh, she is weighted down and heavy with visible things and cannot depart into the invisible spirit-world. May not these heavy souls, oppressed with the taint of life, be the ones who are said to haunt graveyards and tombs?

Cebes. It seems likely.

Socrates. These souls are the evil souls, and, from that desire for the body which their sensual life stained them with, they will ultimately reinhabit a body. But they are likely to be enclosed in the bodies of animals, such animals, indeed, as most resemble the previous life of these souls. Does it not seem likely, for instance, that a wanton and sensual soul should inhabit, say, the body of an ass? And that the tyrannous and the unjust and the

thievish should inhabit the bodies of wolves, and hawks, and vultures?

Cebes. No doubt they do go into such animals.

Socrates. But those souls who were virtuous in life are the happiest?

Cebes. Why so?

Socrates. Because they are likely to go into those animals which have natures like their own, such as the gentle bees and wasps, or even the bodies of those men who make good citizens.

Cebes. Yes; it seems likely.

Socrates. But only the soul of the philosopher is allowed to come among the gods, and therefore the true philosopher is temperate in life. 'Tis the philosopher who perceives what a prison the body is, and seeks to set free his soul therefrom. The soul of the philosopher, in her turn, thinks it wrong to resist this attempt to free her from captivity, so she aids him by holding aloof as far as she can from the contamination that comes from too close communion with the body. For every pleasure and pain of the body is a kind of nail, fastening the soul to the flesh, so that when death comes she is ready, not for the divine and the pure and the uniform, but for the mortal and the impure and the manifold, and falls almost at once back into a corporeal state, in some living body such as we have mentioned. For such reasons, my friends, true philosophers are temperate and virtuous, and not from fear of the majority or because of rules and morals. And their souls, so carefully nurtured, will never fear dissolution when they leave the body they have so long sought to escape from.

Simmias. Yet, Socrates, we have difficulties. Take, for example, a lyre: its wooden parts and strings may be compared to the body, and

its music or harmony to the soul, may they not? For the soul is after all but the harmonious spirit or manifestation of the body when it is properly alive and in tune, yet the music of the lyre perishes when the strings are broken and does not last even until the wood has rotted away. What do you say to the man who asserts, contrary to your arguments, that the soul perishes at the death of the body, or even before its flesh has died, and long before the bones have begun to decay?

Cebes also objects, and here there is a break in the argument, for these objections, coming just when all had been convinced by Socrates' discourse, serve to bring despair on the listeners, so that they are likely to suspect all subsequent arguments. But Socrates, at some length, warns them not to hate reason because it occasionally misleads them. They, not reason, are at fault. But they must not let him persuade them against their own logic in his eagerness to prove the soul immortal.

Socrates. Let us proceed. Simmias fears that the soul, like a harmony, may perish before the body, though she is more divine than the body. Cebes concedes that the soul is more enduring than the body, but he thinks that, after wearing out many bodies many times, the soul perishes on leaving her last body, or that she wears out, and that this be death in reality, the death of the soul, for the dissolution of the body is eternal. Do you reject all our previous conclusions, or only some of them?

Simmias and Cebes. Only some of them. We acknowledge the doctrine of recollection to be true.

Socrates is immediately able to demonstrate that, since the doctrine of recollection proves that the soul existed before the body, the soul

cannot be a harmony, for a harmony exists only after the component parts of the instrument by which it is produced have been brought together into a finite whole. He goes further, and by showing that the soul leads the body—i. e., the will, in enduring fasts and privations, controls or leads the body—and is not led by it, whereas a harmony is an expression of the instrument from which it comes and does not lead but is led. Hence, Simmias' objection is untenable.

To answer Cebes, Socrates goes deeply into the question of generation and decay. In his youth he puzzled over the mechanical and physical causes given for natural phenomena by the philosophers of Physical Science. When Anaxagoras proposed the Mind as the one Universal Cause, he was cheered, but as soon as he read Anaxagoras' books he was disappointed, and was obliged to seek for causes of his own. Socrates now delineates the doctrine of Ideas (see Will Durant's *Guide to Plato*, Little Blue Book No. 159, Pages 50 ff.): i. e., Ideas are the fundamental and only causes of all phenomena—beauty, beautiful things, goodness, justice, and so on—and opposite Ideas cannot exist at the same time in the same person. For example, although it may be said that Simmias is both tall and short, for he is taller than Socrates and shorter than Phædo, this is true only comparatively. An Idea cannot exist with its opposite: heat cannot exist side by side with cold, or right with wrong; and further, an Idea will not unite with that which is inseparable from its opposite: snow, inseparable from cold, will not unite with heat; or fire, inseparable from heat, will not unite with cold. Now life is the opposite of death, and the soul is inseparable from life so that, as a consequence, the soul cannot admit death.

Hence, the soul is immortal and indestructible, and lives on after the body dies.

At once comes the thought that if the soul does survive, the consequences of neglecting her proper preparation for the next life must be terrible to contemplate. Socrates therefore goes on into a description of the soul's journey into Hades, and her existence there, until he is led into an exposition of the earth in what is known as the *"Myth of the Phaedo"*—this myth, it is worthwhile to notice, being interposed between the "hard metaphysical argument of the dialogue" and the scene of Socrates' noble death.

Crito. Very well, Socrates. But haven't you some instructions to give us concerning your children or earthly things? How may we serve you best?

Socrates. You may serve me only by taking care of yourselves, my friends, in all that you do.

Crito. We will do our best, Socrates. But how shall we bury you?

Socrates. As you please. But catch me first: see that I do not escape! I have not convinced Crito that I am the Socrates who has been talking with all of you: he regards me as the body which will presently be a corpse, for he seeks how he is to bury me. You, who have admitted the truth of my arguments, must be my sureties to Crito that I shall leave my body when I die, and that whatever thereafter is done to my corpse is in no sense done to me. Therefore, dear Crito, you may bury it as you see fit.

Socrates now leaves to bathe in preparation for death; he sees his sons, and his wife, giving them his last commands; a servant of the Eleven—the "committee" appointed to superintend all executions—announces that the time for taking the poison has come.

Socrates. Come, Crito, let us obey him at once. If the poison is ready, have it brought; if it is not ready, have it prepared.

Crito. Nay; the sun has not yet set. Do not hurry, Socrates—other men take the poison quite late, and eat and drink merrily with their friends meanwhile. There is yet time.

Socrates. Naturally, Crito, for they think to gain respite thereby. I, to whom the pleasures of the flesh are nothing, can gain nothing by such a foolish prolongation of a life already spent. I bid you, bring the poison.

A slave is despatched, and returns with the man who is to administer the poison. He carries it, prepared, in a cup.

Socrates. Tell me, good sir, what I am to do.

Administrator. Drink this, walk about until your limbs feel heavy, and then lie down: the poison will do the rest.

The administrator hands the cup to Socrates, who takes it cheerfully, without trembling, and without any change of color or motion of feature, all the while looking up at the man with a fixed glance which was characteristic of him.

Socrates. May I not make a libation from this drink?

Administrator. We prepare only enough for the purpose.

Socrates. I understand that. But I suppose I may, nay, I suppose I must pray to the gods that my journey hence may be prosperous. I pray that it indeed be so.

So saying, he puts the cup to his lips and drinks the poison quite calmly and cheerfully. Till this moment, most of his friends have been able to control their emotions fairly well, but when they see him actually imbibing the dread poison, and perceive the empty cup, they can control themselves no longer: tears come into

the eyes of Phædo in spite of himself, and he covers his face and weeps, not for Socrates, but for his own misfortune in losing such a friend. Even before this, poor Crito has been unable to hold back his tears, and has gone away, while Apollodorus, who has been weeping nearly all the time, suddenly bursts out into a loud cry, and makes all the rest break down by the example of his sobbing and grief—except, indeed, only Socrates himself.

Socrates. What are you doing, my dear friends? I sent the women away so they might not offend as you are—with tears—for I believe a man should die in quiet and peace. Calm yourselves: bear with me.

At the sound of his words, they are ashamed, and cease their lamenting. Socrates gets up and walks about, until his legs begin to grow heavy, and then he lies down again on his back, as the administrator instructed him. The administrator now begins to examine his feet and legs from time to time; then he presses his foot hard, and asks if there is any feeling in it. Socrates says No. Then the administrator does the same with his legs, and so on, higher and higher, showing that he is cold and stiff. Socrates feels himself, and says that when the poison comes to his heart, he will be gone. He is already growing cold about the groin, when he uncovers his face, and speaks for the last time.

Socrates. Crito, dear friend, I owe a cock to Asclepius; be sure that it is paid. [Referring, probably, to the practice of offering a cock to Asclepius, a deity of medicine, on recovering from sickness: Socrates is regarding death as a delivery from the sickness of life.]

Crito. It shall be paid. Do you wish anything else, Socrates?

Socrates does not answer; but after a short interval there is a movement, and the administrator uncovers him, and his eyes are fixed. Crito then closes his eyes and mouth.

Phædo concludes his recounting to Echecrates: "Such was the end, Echecrates, of our friend, a man, I think, who was the wisest and justest, and the best man that I have ever known."

* * *

The action of the poison, which was hemlock, is much as has been described: wholly painless, causing a gradual numbing of the limbs and a loss of sensation. There was a fine nobility and dignity about this form of execution, allowing a man to administer the poison to himself, at the moment he chose, in the presence of a select group of dear and intimate friends. That Socrates ennobled that dignity some degrees further is beyond cavil: the dramatic scene scarce needs the verbal power of Plato to stamp it indelibly on the mind of the reader.